

A new species of *Phebalium* from south-eastern New South Wales

By P. G. Wilson

Abstract

Phebalium ellipticum sp. nov. is described from collections made in the mountain ranges to the east of Cooma, New South Wales. It is placed with *P. ovatifolium* and *P. squameum* in the section *Eriostemoides*.

Phebalium ellipticum P. G. Wilson sp. nov. (Figure 1).

Folia elliptica, 20 x 8–35 x 15 mm, chartacea, retusa, supra glabra, infra lepidota. *Inflorescentiae* axillares, ca. 10 mm longae, 2–5 florum; pedicelli ca. 2 mm longi, bracteolis duabus linearibus minutis caducis ornatis. *Sepala* libera, ca. 1 mm longa, glabra. *Petala* elliptica, ca. 5 mm longa, glabra, alba. *Stamina* petala aequantia, filamentis subulatis glabris, antheris ellipticis retusis. *Discus* ca. 0.5 mm altus, glaber. *Ovarium* lepidotum; stylus glaber; stigma minutum integrum.

Type: East slope of Big Badja Mountain just below summit "Leaning bushy shrub with numerous branches arising from base, ca. 1 m high; common among bushy shrubs above tree line", 27 Oct. 1972, *J. P. Baker* 907 (holo: NSW; iso: CANB, GAUBA, K, MEL, PERTH).

Bushy shrub to 1.5 m high. Branches terete, lepidote, sparsely to densely glandular verrucose. Leaves shortly petiolate; lamina flat, elliptical, 20 x 8–35 x 15 mm, retuse, firmly chartaceous, glabrous above, closely silvery lepidote below. Inflorescences of short axillary 2–5 flowered cymes ca. 10 mm long; bracts subfoliaceous (but small), very reduced upwards, caducous; bracteoles 2, minute and linear, situated in middle of the short (ca. 2 mm) pedicel, caducous. Sepals free, triangular, ca. 1 mm long, fleshy, glabrous (or sparsely lepidote when young). Petals slightly imbricate, elliptical, ca. 5 mm long, glabrous, white. Ovary hemispherical, ca. 1 mm high, silvery lepidote; style slender, terete, glabrous, ca. 2 mm long; stigma entire, equal in width to style. Fruit: cocci spreading, quadrate, very shortly apiculate, 3 mm long; seed not seen.

Distribution: on mountains south and east of Cooma, in the extreme south-east of New South Wales.

NEW SOUTH WALES: "East of Nimitybelle" (= Nimmitabel), head of Howitt's Swamp, 9 Feb. 1908, *R. H. Cambage* 1862 (NSW, SYD); Big Badja Mtn., ca. 20 mi E of Cooma, alt. ca. 4000 ft., 23 Oct. 1971, *J. Webb* (GAUBA).

This species belongs to the section *Eriostemoides* whose other two members are *Phebalium ovatifolium* and *P. squameum*. The distribution of this section is from Tasmania northwards to the south-eastern extremity of Queensland. *Phebalium ellipticum* therefore occupies a central position in relation to the distribution of the section as a whole.

In a revision of the genus *Phebalium* by the present author* reference was made in a note under "*Phebalium* sp. aff. *squameum*" (p. 95) to a vegetative specimen, Cambage 1862. This specimen belongs to *P. ellipticum*. It was stated in that paper that the specimen resembled in leaf form the Tasmanian plant *P. squameum* subsp. *retusum*. From this taxon it may be clearly distinguished in the flowering condition by the presence of a lepidote ovary. From *P. ovatifolium*, to which it also bears a resemblance, it may be distinguished by its much larger leaves and by the absence of the prominent and persistent bracteoles which characterize the former species.

* Nuytsia 1:1–155 (1970).



Figure 1—*Phebalium ellipticum* sp. nov. Holotype NSW ex GAUBA, J. P. Baker 907.

Phebalium ellipticum is not the same species as the collection Gates no. 12 (from Woods Point, Goulburn River, Victoria) which, in the revision, was referred to as *Phebalium* sp. aff. *squameum*. This collection represents an as yet undescribed species which differs from *P. ellipticum* most obviously in having lepidote petals and sepals.

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